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ERIE COUNTY COMPTROLLER

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COMPTROLLER MYCHAJLIW: REPORT SHOWS ADMINISTRATION SHORTCHANGING COUNTY WORKERS

County quickly took money out of paychecks from second & third shift workers for increased health care costs, yet they have not been given increased pay for shift differential

(ERIE COUNTY, NY) – Erie County Comptroller Stefan I. Mychajliw Jr. uncovered a pay discrepancy that shows Erie County is underpaying CSEA employees that work second or third shift. A report that examined the current CSEA contract found that the agreed upon pay increase for these employees has not been implemented, despite being approved by the Legislature in January of 2018.

These hard working employees provide important services for taxpayers, including after-hours social workers that protect children, Central Police Services 9-1-1 operators, ambulance dispatchers, crime scene investigators, park rangers, probation officers, building maintenance workers and highway crews.

A tip received through the Comptroller Office’s Whistleblower Hotline claimed that employees are not being properly compensated for hours worked. The report found that employees working second and third shift are still being paid the lower rate under terms of an old contract. The Comptroller is recommending the error be fixed. While the contractually approved increased shift differential payments are not being made to employees, the County of Erie is taking money out of paychecks of union workers for agreed upon increased health care payments.

“The administration was quick to take money out of workers’ paychecks for increased health care costs. I don’t understand why the county didn’t move as fast to pay workers what they’re due. Five months since the contract was approved by the Legislature, those eligible for the increased shift differential payment have not been paid appropriately. This error needs to be corrected immediately. The administration cannot pick and choose what parts of the contract they want to enact. Our union workers deserve better,” said Comptroller Mychajliw.

According to the CSEA contract, shift differential for an afternoon shift increased from \$0.85 an hour to \$1.20 an hour. Shift differential for the midnight shift increased from \$0.85 an hour to \$1.50 an hour. The report takes into account that the exact date on when that new rate should have gone into effect is unclear. Therefore, in the report, the Comptroller’s Office estimates that CSEA employees have been underpaid AT LEAST \$15,369 for work performed from Jan. 18, 2018 through May 11, 2018. The total cost could be more if additional days were included in the new contract.

As a result of the Audit Division’s review of this issue, Comptroller Mychajliw is recommending that all impacted employees immediately receive back pay they are owed for work already performed. Comptroller Mychajliw also wants steps to be taken to ensure employees are being compensated in accordance with the contract.

“Like it or not, the contract must be honored. The Legislature believes what they approved has already been put into place. These hardworking county employees, working second or third shift, are guaranteed shift differential payments. The money should not be withheld for any reason,” concluded Comptroller Mychajliw.



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